

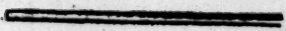
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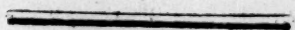
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THE
AGE OF FOLLY.



PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

AGE OF FOLLY

1797 ~

THE
AGE OF FOLLY :

A
POEM.

“ Methinks I view the joyous crowd advance,
“ Entwine the wreath, and lead up *fashions dance* !
“ She, airy goddess, joins the mad career,
“ And Folly, consecrates, the giddy year ! ”

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR :

AND

Sold by W. CLARKE, No. 38, NEW-BOND STREET.

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THE

AGE OF POLLY

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A

POEM

"Mother, I view the joyous crowd advance
"Tossing the wreath, and lend up jubilee
"Sing, my mother, join the mad career,
"For Polly, conqueror, the glory year."

LONDON

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR

AND

W. W. CLARKE, No. 1, Horse Street

T H E
AGE OF FOLLY.

I Sing, nor knights, nor heroes clad in arms,
What time the moon unveil'd her splendid charms,
Nor captive damsels, dress'd in bridal white,
Nor rocking tower, with attendant sprite !
No ! nor the battlements with ivy crown'd,
The meteors glare, nor dread sepulchral found !

These hacknied themes, the sportive muse disdains,
And wakes to FOLLY, her unvarnish'd strains.

Folly, incessant, changing to the view,
The pleasing object that all ranks pursue!

Hail wond'rous age! by various titles known,
By pride puff'd up, with vanity o'ergrown.
Incessant vaunting in high sounding lay,
The world gets wiser each succeeding day;
Though all can see, without prophetic lore,
That Folly, triumphs, as in days of yore;
Gains hourly vot'ries, at her motley shrine,
Who crowd her fane, and hail the nymph divine.

Methinks I view the joyous crowd advance,
Entwine the wreath, and lead up *fashions dance*!
She, airy goddess, joins the mad career,
And Folly, consecrates the giddy year.
How hard the task, to catch each flitting beam,
That sportive plays o'er Folly's rapid stream.

Fain would I sing the TRUNK, and varied ills
 That flow'd from taking antiquarian pills !
 At first, small doses, with great ease went down,
 But larger boluses, half choak'd the town.
 Rever'd old lumber, cramm'd with varied store,
 Of IRELANDES deeds, and legendary lore :
 Small trunks give way—avaunt ye pigmy elves,
 And skulk neglected on your narrow shelves.
 Boast not your outfides, or your linings neat,
 All trunks must yield to that of NORFOLK STREET,
 Where fire, and son, display'd thy rich contents,
 And tun'd their pipes, to marvellous events !
 Folly, enraptur'd, heard the pleasing sound,
 And spread the joyful tidings far around.
 Round HENRY's waist, she bound her magic zone,
 And, *broad assurance*, hail'd the child her own.
 Then about nothing, what a much ado,
 In proving what was false, and what was true.

'Twas

'Twas then MALONE, with dread gigantic stride,
 His critic arrow, to his bow applied,
 And aim'd the shaft, at trembling folly's heart,
 Till CHALMERS rose, and wisely took her part.

But not alone to literature confin'd,
 Folly pervades, the whole of human kind ;
 Lurks in the *church*, in *senate*, and at *bar*,
 Sports on the *stage*, and spreads the din of *war*.
 Alike she fosters all her numerous train,
 From *Hyde Park-corner*, down to *Lukener's-lane* ;
 The priest, the poet, lawyer, and my lord,
 Ladies, and sharpers—act with one accord :
 Together link'd, the merry group appears,
 And patient candour thus each foible hears.

Lo QU--SB--Y's Duke, just tottering o'er the grave,
 To whim, caprice, and folly's laws a slave.

Behold

Behold him stand, unable to decide,
 Whether to walk—to sleep—to chat—or ride :
 His *eye* sublime, on vacancy is bent,
 And shivering footmen wait the great event !!
 At length he mounts his splendid viz-a-viz,
 And twice five minutes seems in perfect glee ;
 But soon by dull satiety fore gall'd,
 The scene to change, the little pony's call'd,
 Away he canters, up and down the streets,
 And smiles, and bows, to every girl he meets ;
 But *girl*, nor *pony*, no, nor *viz-a-viz* !
 Can kill that tedious dæmon, *Ennui*.
 Till night draws on, and Parifot invites,
 By graceful steps, to Opera delights ;
 There fix'd in pit, he takes his willing stand,
 The eye-glass shaking, in his trembling hand.
 Smirking applause, as HILLESBERG draws nigh,
 While his star sparkles, with each amorous sigh.

When all these pleasing visions are no more,
 And Drury's Nymphs, their Qu--sb--y deplore,
 Ere thy gay spirit, to its rest is led,
 Some worn out Venus, shall make smooth thy bed ;
 With blooming flourets, braid thy silver hair,
 And smiling, make thee her peculiar care ;
 Sylphs, shall with Burgamot, perfume the room,
 And limping cupids, light thee to the tomb.

But now my Muse pursues her daring flight,
 Where Faros Host, in riot drown the night.
 Are these the beauties of fair Albion's Isle ?
 On whom the sportive loves were wont to smile.

Where is the modest blush ?—the tender sigh ?
 The lips vermillion ?—and the azure eye ?
 Where fled the native roses of the cheek ;
 The dimpled smile, and heav'n born temper meek ?

Wild

Wild gusts of passion, rend the vaulted dome,
 And Furies' spirits through the mansion roam.
 The haggard cheek, and pale unhallow'd brow,
 Sickness proclaim, and order disavow.
Countess, meets *Countess*, with redoubled charge,
 And ruin, rage, and av'rice, stalk at large.
 One, midst the rest, pre-eminently great,
 Squat, round, and fat, appears the Queen of fate ;
 Just three feet square, with feathers six feet high,
 On the pil'd stakes, she casts a longing eye ;
 And scarce the turn of fortune's wheel is told,
 E're her plump fingers, scramble all the gold.

FOLLY, in various subtle forms ensnares,
 And *inconsistency*, her standard bears.
 SCAR--LE the worthy,—EARD--Y the humane,
 And B--NGOR's Bishop, march amidst the train !

SCAR--LE,

SCAR--LE, whose cash, like wild-fire flew about,
 To raise a mansion, elegant throughout;
 Fully succeeded : Genius mark'd the line,
 And taste, and beauty, own'd the grand design.
 Yet he has follies, glaring to the view,
 And chuckling BROAD--ST, owns th' assertion true.
 BROAD--ST, who late behind the table stood,
 And bow'd subservient, for his daily food;
 With art, contrivance, and low cunning stor'd,
 His coffers fill'd, and car'd not for his lord.

The Muse of CUMBERLAND, in colours true,
 From EARD--Y form'd her *highly finish'd* Jew!
 His known humanity, the boast of fame,
 And gen'rous deeds,—a noble heart proclaim.
 View then with wonder, this supreme of men!
 Trembling at Libels, from a woman's pen.

Bribing

Bribing her silence, to avoid the lash,
While prudent *Townshend* calmly guards the cash!

Sad times, I ween, when Bishops learn to box!
In spite of Paul's Epistle—orthodox;
Who writes, that he who holds th' important trust,
Should riots shun, be diligent, and just:
No striker—wrangler—nor given to wine—
Nor after heaps of filthy lucre pine.
But we'll suppose the Bishop oft' had read,
"FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT,"—and you have naught to dread;
So finding that his limbs were strong and stout,
His reverence fairly—fought the Battle out!

But why alone, record a Bishop's name;
A boxing Duke, puts in his plea for fame:
One who sheds tears, in memory of *Big Ben*,
And science, lost, in *Johnson*—best of men.

He, when the Fate's, shall seal his final doom,
 From BACON's hands, shall claim the sculptur'd tomb.
 Fam'd for the brawny statues in St. Paul's,
 That breathe defiance, to the weeping walls.
 Full in the front, the bas relief shall shew,
 Death clenching fists, to give a knock down blow.
 Cupids in groups, a sparring match shall form,
 And neat *Mendoza*, aid the jarring storm :
 His Grace, on high—shall o'er the whole preside,
 With Mrs. EST—N, drooping by his side.

Strange, *inconsistency* !---inspire my lay,
 For even BU—KE, avows thy sovereign sway :
 He whom the flow'ry Graces, taught to write,
 To gild conviction, and to set us right ;
 To make us wonder, at his tropes new clad,
 And gaze with reverence, at his prose run mad.

Yes,

Yes, he, forgetting former ranting times,
Rings triple bobs-- to *Ministerial* chimes!

Ah! Ah! friend WIL--s!--what you are in the group!
The Captain general, of the Lumber Troop!!
Long laid on shelves, who once talk'd wond'rous great!
Of Patriot Virtue,--and the helm of state:
But snug in port, the case is alter'd quite,
The wheels run smooth, and every thing goes right;
Yet still, such careful conduct, who can blame?
Perhaps, e'en F-x, or GR-y, might do the same.

What man is this, on horseback, all so gay,
With colour'd handkerchief, and loose array;
Stick stuck in boot, and knowing careless air,
All free and easy, void of thought or care:
O! 'tis that mighty Mars,--GEORGE HA--GER call'd,
In broils, and battles, constantly enthral'd,

For

For to be true, to sportive Folly's laws,
Whim, fire, and frolic, must assist the cause.

The scene to change, and give to satire play,
Suppose to *Westminster*---we bend our way,
To that fam'd Hall, by WILLIAM RUFUS rais'd,
Where rancours torch, has oft with fury blaz'd.
Where wooden angels, from the roof look down,
And seem to smile, on passing wig and gown ;
Where baited HAS---G's, through revolving years,
Brav'd the high scent of Managers and Peers.

How much it glads the Poet when he sees,
The powder'd Council, palm the golden fees !
Displaying eloquence, to crowds around,
Till waistcoat pockets jingle to the sound.
ERSK---E, and MING---Y, in the front appear,
And wigs that stand for nothing, close the rear.

KEN---N

KEN--N aloft, encased in fable gown,
 With sapient brow, and low'ring eye looks down.
 Right wisely sure, from prudent maxims drain'd,
 A penny sav'd, is just a penny gain'd.
 O! might the Muse, in law, but give advice,
 She fain would fettle quarrels in a trice :
 Though vain the hope, accept in humble strain,
 A simple anecdote, in language plain.

An aged Lawyer---fann'd by fortune's breeze,
 Had bid adieu---to bench---to bar---and fees ;
 And dealt out knowledge from his ample store,
 By ounces now, whence pounds were drawn before.
 When once a dame, who meant a knave to sue,
 Came to the sage, and ask'd him what to do ;
 He thus replied.---“ Believe me when I say,
 “ Should e're a villain take my coat away ;

“ And would not quietly the loss repair,
“ Rather than sue him, on my word I swear,
“ I’d rest content---nor e’er my coat pursue,
“ Left CLAIMING that, I lost my BREECHES too ! ”

With this advice---another course we steer,
Let law researchers, steady persevere,
Await the courts, with resolution firm,
And look with rapture to th’ ensuing term.
Each ruling passion still will have its sway,
And Folly mark the order of the day.

Hail Love Platonic!--such as glows confess,
With purest flame in DER-Y’s virtuous breast;
Where FAR--N reigns in chastity supreme,
While whispering angels prompt her golden dream.
Such tender love as Lady JER--Y knows,
Whence envy’s shafts, and calumny arose.

’Tis

'Tis virtuous love, that gilds the magic scene,
 And makes grave fixty, blooming as fifteen.
 Though other aids, I ween may do as well,
 As varied lifts of fam'd cosmetics tell.
 Where pastes, and rouge, preserve each lovely grace,
 Defying time,—like Lady ARC--RS face !

Again the Muse, to literature returns,
 Surveys the field, and with fresh ardour burns.
 Hail Lady Authors !—Ye who Novels write ;
 And, ye, who Plays, in summer months indite :
 Ye who compose, in sweet romantic strain,
 Whole reams of manuscript for MISTER LANE.
 Ye, I invoke, to sympathy sincere,
 To heave the sigh, and shed the crystal tear.
 Mourn---mourn---ye labourers in folly's cause,
 No longer Comedy excites applause.

No longer TRUTH in Biographic page,
 Shall speak of Generals *, to a wond'ring age :
 No Lady's WHIMS †, shall henceforth please the town ;
 But critic brows, shall o'er each pamphlet frown.
 Grief shall extend to Britain's farthest shore,
 For Lady WALL-CE VOWS *she'll write no more!!*

How learn'd the times, when authors, high and low,
 Together meet in Pater-noster Row !
 Lawyers, and Statesmen---Peers, and plotting elves,
 Their labours join, and crowd the lengthen'd shelves :
 Hence new coin'd titles, fraught with puffs appear,
 And *Utrum Horum!*---grates the tortur'd ear !

How sweet are POLITICS, to bring in cash,
 Now here---now there---the *party* fire to flash ;

* General Dumourier.

† A Comedy so called.

To finge the whiskers of great men in power,
 Or dread reforming OPPOSITION scour !
 'Tis still the same, for New Editions rise,
 And golden mountains charm the author's eyes !
 There may be some, who, never profits claim,
 Whose only thirst is literary fame :
Perchance it may be so :---some chosen few,
 BU-KE's Dash, to wit, and ERSK--E's sugar'd VIEW *.

Another race of authors claim regard,
 Who common scenes of common life discard :
 Who bounds of probability o'er leap,
 And conjure Dæmons, from the vasty deep !
 How smoothly flows, the mild instructive page,
 When shades, and spectres, every thought engage :
 When Daggers, Death, and Inquisitions dire,
 Fill the wild brain with energetic fire :
 When shrouded sprites, with skeletons arise,
 And *blue mould candles*,---nature's place supplies.

F

Then

* View of the present War.

Then does it please the poet's eye to see,
 Some deep read misf,---in horrid mystery,
 Trim her pale lamp, and fearful look around,
 Starting with terror, at each fancied sound :
 But still resolved, the Ghostly race to run,
 She reads, and trembles, till the bell tolls *one* !

Avaunt ye shapes, that *Grub-street* story owns,
 Y'clept *Raw Head*, and mighty *Bloody Bones*.
 No more *Tom Hickathrift*, shall claim the bays,
 Nor giant *killiſg Johnny*, look for praise.
 For if to stretch the eyes like faucers wide,
 To freeze the blood, and o'er the passions stride ;
 To cause the hair like quills to perch on end,
 And horrid thoughts, with horrid actions blend.
 If such is merit,---candour's self must own
 The *Monk* of LEWIS, conscious stands alone,
 Unless we bring to fill a second place,
 The tales of *Radcliff* wrapt in mystic grace.

Take

Take breath, O Muse ! then strike the lyre again,
 For many *Worthies* yet unfung remain ;
 Who baffle on, and various paths pursue,
 Yet all *en masse*, to Folly's tenets true.

Say---who is that, that flyly skulks away,
 And seems to dread the face of open day,
 Perhaps some *Statesman*,---conscious of his crimes,
 With terror, shunning truths of future times.
 But hold,---nor let us run our bark aground,
 Surely no follies in the state are found !
 All, all are perfect !---for each station fit,
 From *close cropt* BED---D, up to WILLIAM P--T.
 O P--T sublime !---to highest honours rais'd,
 by *Outs* be-spatter'd,---and by *Ins* be-prais'd ;
 Thee I address---nor deem the poet wrong,
 Who bids thy num'rous virtues live in song ;
 Some trifling *follies*, to the best may fall,
 But thine great *Potentate*,---are least of all.

We scarce discern them, they so small appear,
 When plac'd before thy Wisdom's bright career;
 Shouldst thou be chang'd, we ne'er again shall see,
 A Premier—modest—mild, and pure like thee,
 So thinks the bard,—who farther to declare
 His patriot feelings,—offers up a prayer.

May guardian angels, of that charm *finance*,
 Thy power increase, and every wish enhance,
 May city Merchants,—pleas'd, thy influence own,
 And guineas show'r, to aid each coming loan.
 May F-x change sides, and SHER---N shut shop;
 Nor e'en to debts increasing put a stop.
 Should *Johnny Bull* indignant turn his tail,
 O may thy soothing eloquence prevail.
 Prove to his senses, sterling ore is trash,
 And scraps of paper just the same as cash.
 We know that all thy ways are just and true,
 For England's good—though hid from vulgar view.

What

Whate'er thy taxes, may they all succeed,
 'Tis right in Freedom's glorious cause to bleed.
 The muse inspired feels prophetic flame,
 And wafts to ages—P--T's unfulfilled name;
 May white rob'd Innocence thy slumbers guard,
 And EDEN prove thy merited reward.

Far be the thought irreverent to pass,
 That mighty Thane, and true furnam'd DUN--s.
 Before such worth, I feel I can't tell how,
 And fill'd with admiration! make my bow.
 How sweet the wine at Wimb---n goes down,
 When news of consequence arrives from town.
 There P--T presides,—and order guides the whole,
 “ The feast of reason—and the flow of foul.”
 Nor shall the *booted* GREN---LE be forgot,
 Whose coolness to the Don, defiance shot;
 Nor patient MALMS---Y—and his peaceful train,
 Who *went to Paris—and—came back again!*

What pleasures buz around a crowded court,
 Where 'wit, politeness, and the Loves resort,
 Where sparkling eyes, with richest diamonds vie,
 And youthful nobles—heave the tender sigh.
 Where bags and fwords, and epaulets combine,
 And full drest cupids—filken bands entwine.
 Peers, priests, and soldiers, eloquence dispense,
 And sweetest perfumes, charm the ravish'd sense.
 But what avails it, worthy brother P--E,
 Small gains I ween—it brings to you or I;
 When all our odes, and madrigals are spun,
 You get some sack indeed!—but I get none!

No longer bards in flowing robes array'd,
 Their brows with wreaths—and locks with chaplets braid.
 No princess now—presents the laurel'd crown,
 Nor throned sages look with rapture down.
 No more the harp, with dulcet note inspires,
 No longer virgins—strike their golden lyres.

But, sad reverse!—fell ills invade the wight,
 Who dares in these degenerate days to write.
 The brown bobb'd critic—deck'd in blue dy'd hose,
 With pen in hand, and spectacles on nose ;
 Each month reviews, some offspring of the day,
 A quire of poesy, or a modern play !

A modern play—exclaims some well bred fair,
 Surely no faults can ever center there :
 All must the author's, charming influence feel,
 So trifling—whimsical, and so genteel !
 I grant the whole assertion just and true,
 And give to genius every merit due.
 But some there are so niggardly of praise,
 That dare bring forward Bards of former days ;
 That talk with rapture of an ANNA's reign,
 And boast their *Congreve* in heroic strain.
 Preferring stale, abolish'd, worn out themes,
 To wit from REYNOLD's, rich in bold extremes.

To MORTON's muse, close tripping at his heels,
 And all the sentiment an INCHBALD feels.
 To HOLCROFT's wildness—HOARE's correct design,
 And fine drawn CUMBERLAND's instructive line.

Can there be men, so void of sense and taste,
 On *Congreve's* wit, a moments time to waste ;
 When droll O KEEFE, and COBB, in merry strain,
 With mirth and pleasure, animate each vein ;
 Say, what is *Fargbuar's*, or a *Vanburgh's* name,
 All must give place to modern claims to fame.
 When COLMAN's plays, in all their pomp appear,
 Scarce less than *Shakespeare's*—eloquent and clear ;
 High plum'd by favor, deck'd in *fustian* vest,
 Sublimely seated on his *Iron Chest* ;
 He bids us hail him guardian of the stage,
 The *Piccadilly Pliny* of the age !
 Lo ! at his name JOHN KEMBLE taking fire.
 Who dares with KEMBLE to renown aspire ?

The great J. P. whose talents daily shine,
 In alterations and corrections fine,
 Who wrote the whole of LODOISKA's tale,
 And in chaste readings feldom known to fail ;
 For rather than abide by former rules
 The lessons taught in old Theatric schools,
 He twists and turns each sentence into play,
 Till sense lies mangled in the wordy fray.
 The whisker'd BAJAZETS, in times of yore,
 Laid in of rant, and rich bombast a store.
 But JOHN's conception could not rage approve,
 So roar'd the part—"like any *turtle dove* !"

Next HOLMAN comes, of praise to snatch his share,
 In double rank of Dramatist and Play'r :
 A public's plaudits, prove that he can write,
 And please while *Operas* shall yield delight :
 While sweetly smooth, the sanction'd couplet runs,
 The Haily-Gailies---Jiggs---and Dreary Duns.

Nor yet unskill'd in Pantomimic lore,
 He knows the use of curtain, trap, and door ;
 Can catch applause, from sophas at a Nick,
 Nor scarce can REYNOLDS---shew a better trick.
 In acting great ! like KEMBLEs, all his own,
 He strives to fill the ROSCIAN chair alone ;
 Looks, moves, and speaks, enwapt in inward bliss,
 That seems to say "*could GARRICK act like this ?*"
 With lungs stentorian, cracks th' vaulted dome,
 In love or anger, equally at home :
 When ROMEO's plaints the tender rows delight,
 He shews his teeth,---as purest ivory white,
 Soft flow the accents from his silver tongue,
 Till nymphs by hundreds sigh, with nerves unstrung :
 Each love-sick sempstrefs---hails the youth divine ;
 And *Boarding Schools* pronounce him---*monstrous fine !*

More of the trade, though minor, claim a niche
 In Folly's fane---her altar to enrich.

But

But what are these to managers august,
 Who gaz'd with rapture on her hallow'd bust ;
 To action rous'd by raging thirst of gain,
 Rais'd the proud edifice of *Drury Lane* ;
 Whose tow'ring roof, drowns voices in a trice,
 And strutting heroes look as small as mice.
 E'en graceful *Siddons* of majestic mien,
 Appears the moving puppet of the scene.

Still oft we find, when mighty ills abound,
 That potent remedies with care are found ;
 Thus *Drury Lane*---and *Covent Garden* hight,
 Know how to value, that fam'd motley sprite
 Call'd *Harlequin*.---Hence *magic fires* arise,
 And *Fantocinies* charm the gazer's eyes.
Cart-wheels and *Candlesticks* full houses draw,
 Plain sense is banish'd, PANTOMIME is Law !
 Though Myriads still, without the court await,
 Folly commands,---and candour shuts the gate.

Fantastic goddess, at whose shrine we bend,
 O deign the muses efforts to commend,
 And should they chance a transient smile to raise,
 Be *thine* the merit,—and be *thine* the praise.

F I N I S.